

## Deflation Measures Go Too Far When Wifely House Plans Affected

By Monte Noelke

4-21-66

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MERTZON, Texas — This is election year in the land the Arapahoe called “Low Ball,” yet the local political experts have been exceptionally quiet. Other than a portion of the alarmist element screaming predictions about the day when 50 cents will no longer buy a two-for-a nickel cigar, or the moderate group denouncing compulsory taxation, our once active body of political observers is as calm as if muted by the dry west winds.

The President’s speech to a gathering of businessmen a few weeks ago did create some stir among members of the forum. Their attention was focused on Mr. Johnson’s words which, in effect, stated that he was so opposed to inflation that he wasn’t going to allow Mrs. Johnson to build two more rooms on their ranch house in Texas; and that, furthermore, he had told the first lady to shop around the meat markets for cheaper cuts.

The meat angle didn’t mean much to us shortgrassers, mainly because, for a number of years, cuts of meat in the shortgrass country have been defined as the lean end of hog jowls, semi-fattened range goats, or oatmeal blended with beef to make a dish known throughout the English speaking world as hamburger.

But when the news soaked in that the first husband was going to risk stopping some of the first wife’s home improvement plans, male dilettantes in the political scene were shaken worse than at any time since the thrilling days of the ’50s when it appeared that the only hope of disposing of livestock rested in the revival of the bone market that prevailed during the closing days of the buffalo hunting era.

Contemplating possible repercussions of the President’s statement, one faction felt it could lead to excitement around the White House comparable only to the time Andrew Jackson’s supporters threw such a memorable inauguration ball that the world reserve of corn whiskey was threatened with bankruptcy, and the accompanying fisticuffs were so great that interest in the sport of boxing was damaged.

One hombre contended that by the time Mrs. Johnson had called a few early-morning, private listening conferences the Chief Executive was going to wish the ranch house had been blown away by a tornado and the wreckage packed off by souvenir hunters.

This led to a debate on whether it would be patriotic to ask a companero of the President to mediate before a crisis was reached. However, before this discussion reached much momentum, an oldtimer who claims to have survived more female-launched skilletts to the cheek than any other living American, stated that he had weathered all types of wrecks and battles, including wintering some 35-cent cattle one season too long. He said he still considered it the worst error of his career to have become involved once as a volunteer mediator in a marital conflict. He declared that as far as he was concerned the whole countryside could break out in husband and wife bouts that would make the Watts riots of last summer look like a misunderstanding at a first-grade Easter egg hunt, and he wasn’t going to count the wounded — much less enter the fracas as an emissary of peace or a referee.

This old chap concluded in an even more positive tone, saying that he meant to include every family from the one in the White House to the husband-and-wife teams staffing the weather station at the South Pole.

The old sage’s word ended the session. The formerly verbose team of political and domestic experts adjourned and lapsed into silence.